

Message Text

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SUBJ: CARDINAL SIN ON CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS

REF: A) MANILA 18782; B) MANILA 18239

1. LATEST (DEC 10) ISSUE OF FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW
CONTAINS RODNEY TASKER INTERVIEW WITH CARDINAL SIN. IT IS
CARDINAL'S MOST DETAILED COMMENT TO DATE ON RECENT WORSENING
IN CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS. FOLLOWING ARE MAIN POINTS COVERED:

A) SUBVERSION. ASKED WHAT GOVERNMENT MEANT BY SUBVERSION, SIN
EXPRESSED PUZZLEMENT AND SAID GOP SHOULD DEFINE IT. CIMENT: MARCOS
PRESUMABLY MET THIS REQUEST WITH DRACONIAN DEFINITION IN DEC 2
SPEECH REPORTED REFTEL A. END COMMENT.

B) THE CHRISTIAN LEFT. "WE DON'T BELIEVE THERE IS SUCH A THING
AS A LEFTIST CHRISTIAN BECAUSE IF YOU ARE A LEFTIST YOU ARE A
COMMUNIST, AND THEREFORE, YOU ARE NOT A CHRISTIAN."

C) CHURCH COMMUNIST LINKS. SIN ADMITTED THAT "THERE MAY BE SOME
INFILTRATION," BUT SAID GOP SHOULD NOT GENERALIZE TO EXTENT OF
CLAIMING THAT CERTAIN PRIESTS ARE TRYING TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERN-
MENT. "NOBODY WANTS TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT."

D) CHURCH AS CRITIC UNDER MARTIAL LAW. WHILE CHURCH SHARES WITH GOP
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GENERAL GOAL OF HAPPINESS OF PHILIPPINE PEOPLE, "IT DOESN'T MEAN

THAT WE WILL ALWAYS BE FLATTERING THE PRESIDENT -- NOT PAINTING THE WALLS OVER THE TERMITES...WE SHOULD CONTINUE CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM."

E) THE CONSTITUTION. SIN EXPRESSED FEAR FOR FUTURE OF PHILIPPINES UNDER INDEFINITE EXTENSION OF MARTIAL LAW, PARTICULARLY RE SUCCESSION.

"I FEAR THAT IF SOMETHING HAPPENS THERE WILL BE A POWER STRUGGLE." HE ADDED, "THE CONSTITUTION SHOULD BE ABOVE THE PRESIDENT. AT THE MOMENT HE CONTROLS THE CONSTITUTION."

F) DEPORTATION OF GERLOCK AND BOOMS. "I WAS NOT INFORMED IN EITHER CASE UNTIL THERE WERE ON THE PLANE OUT. BOTH SHOULD HAVE AT LEAST BEEN ALLOWED A HEARING." SIN SAID HE CHECKED WITH LAWYERS REGARDING CONSTITUTIONALITY OF GOP ACTION AND REPLY WAS THAT GOP WAS WITHIN ITS RIGHTS. "WE CAN ALWAYS PLEAD FOR A HEARING, BUT I ASKED MYSELF THAT OUT OF 4,000 MISSIONARIES HERE, ONLY FOUR HAVE BEEN EXPELLED (INCLUDING TWO ITALIANS IN JANUARY)...WHY ARE THEY NOT TOUCHING OTHERS? YOU HAVE TO GIVE THE AUTHORITIES THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT. IF THEY (DEPORTED PRIESTS) ARE DOING THESE THING THEN THEY SHOULD BE PUNISHED. IF THE TIME COMES WHEN MISSIONARIES WHOM WE KNOW ARE VERY GOOD ARE BEING DEPORTED THEN WE WILL INTERCEDE. YOU CAN'T BARK ALL THE TIME."

2. COMMENT: THE CARDINAL IS PLAINLY SERVING NOTICE THAT THE CHURCH RESERVES ITS RIGHT TO REMAIN CONCERNED WITH POLITICAL AFFAIRS. HIS COMMENTS ON THE SUCCESSION ISSUE IN PARTICULAR MAY RAISE A FEW EYEBROWS. WITH REGARD TO MORE MUNDANE SPECIFICS SUCH AS DEPORTATION, HOWEVER, HE IS STILL COMING ON AS THE CAUTIOUS PRELATE KEEPING HIS POWDER DRY. HIS REMARKS ARE UNLIKELY TO DETER GOP FROM FURTHER ACTION AGAINST THOSE CONSIDERED RADICAL OR UNDULY ACTIVIST. WITH REGARD TO GERLOCK CASE, SIN MAY BE STRETCHING THE TRUTH A BIT WHEN HE SAID HE HAD NO PRIOR INFORMATION REGARDING DEPORTATION. WE KNOW THAT NUNCIO WAS INFORMED TWO DAYS AHEAD OF TIME (REFTEL B), AND IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT HE WOULD NOT HAVE COMMUNICATED THIS TO SIN. INTERVIEW IS UNLIKELY TO APPEAR IN LOCAL MEDIA, ESPECIALLY SINCE DEMISE OF "SIGNS OF THE TIMES."
SULLIVAN

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